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631 ones. This situation was reported by Magyar, when he wrote,
635 'Quibanda (should be Civanda) to the east has 500 villages. The Chief has great power. He sends tribute every year to the king of Bailundu but is himself fully independent.'[1] Magyar described about 15 *atumbu* or '*ovikandscho*',[2] as he called them, of Bailundu.
[161] He estimated the population of Bailundu at 450,000, and for all the kingdoms of the Ovimbundu 1,200,000,[3] figures which are
[175] probably not very different from present-day facts. The report and description of the 'Capitania de Benguella' in 1799 said that the king of Bailundu dominated 2,056 villages; the king of Viye, 886; and the king of Ngalangi, 900; and listed their 'feudos' respectively as 82, 54, and 78.[4] My list of the Ngalangi *atumbu* shows 112. In Bailundu about 20 *atumbu* were ruled by members of the royal family, including heirs apparent or expectant, and the queen (*Inakulu*), who also had her own establishment.[5] About 20 were ruled by other court officials.

621 Most of these *atumbu* are still recognized as such or as *olombala*.[6]
622 Their decay has not been as great as that of the *ombala*[6] of their
177 liege lord, for they still fulfil certain functions in native life. They have also been given new functions by the administrative authorities.
[651] The minor chiefs as well as village headmen are all required to assist in assessing and collecting the native tax, and also in recruiting labour for government works and for contracts. In some areas they receive in return the remission of their own taxes. In some areas they are required to wear uniforms. On the dancing floors
[692] of most of these minor *olombala* courts are still held, justice determined, and (to a limited extent) fines 'eaten'. Such judgements are not officially recognized or allowed by the European authorities. The African, however, often finds that European courts do not meet his needs or accord with his concepts of justice.

[1] Magyar, op. cit., p. 389.

[2] Umbundu *ovikanjo* (plural), 'branches', a term which through commercial or European influence is applied to the *atumbu*.

[3] For these figures and for descriptions of the several kingdoms, see Magyar, op. cit., chap. ix.

[4] *Annaes Mar. e Col.*, 4a Ser., pp. 155 ff.

[5] Magyar, op. cit., p. 390.

[6] *Olombala*, plural of *ombala*, a capital village or chief's residence.

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The Village

Among the Ovimbundu the outstanding social and political unit at the present time is the village (*imbo*, plural *ovaimbo*). The village may consist of from 5 to 500 households,[1] the heads of which are in the great majority of cases related to each other in the male line. Each village has a headman or elder (*sekulu*, literally 'grandfather' or 'elder father') who is liiterally, according to Umbundu kinship usage, the patriarch of the villagers. He was formerly responsible for his village to the sub-chief, and through him to the king. At the present time, the administrative authorities hold the village headmen responsible for matters relating to taxes, labour recruiting, &c. The present decay of this office and of village life varies very greatly from region to region. Nearly everywhere matters of purely local concern are not directly interfered with, and the headman continues his patriarchal government, assisted by a council of all (male) householders.

Ngendo, a typical village. The village of Ngendo lies at about 14° 40′ east, 11° 40′ south,, about thirty-five miles south-west of the Keve, where that river crosses the fifteenth parallel, and about sixty miles in a direct line from the Atlantic Ocean. Its altitude is about 1,650 metres, and the ground on which it is built slopes down to a small stream of the Keve system. Directly across the stream to the north rises the granite outcrop on which may be seen the ruined fortress of Usengo. Ngendo belongs to the tribe of Kasongi, *etumbu* of Ekongo. It is about fifteen miles north-west of the administrative post of Cassongue and about two miles from the motor road which connects that post and points farther inland with the district capital and port of Novo Redondo.

The most striking feature of this village is the fact that it consists of four smaller units or wards (*ovitawila*, plural), each of which appears to be quite self-contained. The four together make up the village (*imbo*), which name is also applied to either of the two larger units by themselves. Each unit has its own elder, but

[1] Most, but not all, of the larger villages are *olombala* (q.v., *supra*), but even these are not as large now as they formerly were. In 1850 the *ombala* of Bailundu was said to have 5,000 inhabitants (Magyar, op. cit.). At the present time there is probably no village with more than 3,000 inhabitants, and few of that size. The tendency seems to be toward smaller villages, and there is even some movement toward isolated households and farmsteads after the fashion of so many of the Southern Bantu.

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they recognize Sekulu Sikilile, the elder of the largest unit, as the village headman. Only in his village is there a dancing floor (*ocilā*),[1] which is the centre of village life, social, legal, and recreational. As the name indicates, it is first and foremost a place for recreation, but here also religious functions are held since they involve so much dancing and drinking, and here formal cases are tried. The *ocilā* is the heart of the village.

The Men's Club-House. Ngendo does not have that other important Umbundu institution, the Men's Club House (*onjango*).[2] The *onjango* is, or was, hardly less important than the *ocilā*. Perhaps before it fell to its present state of disuse, its place was of even greater importance, for in the *onjango* all the men, youths, and boys gathered day by day for the evening meal. From all the kitchens came baskets of stiff corn porridge (*iputa*), and dishes of relish (*ombelela*)[3] which all shared, from the most honoured guest or the village elders, down to the naked, ash-whitened little boys just old enough (say from seven or eight years) to leave the kitchens to their mothers and sisters. In the *onjango* guests were entertained, judicial cases of lesser import were settled, the day's work and gossip discussed, and youth was educated by precept and example in nearly everything from traditional history to etiquette. The *onjango* was dining-room, living-room, court, school, hotel, and club, all in one. For some of the Ovimbundu it continues to function. Upon inquiry I found that in all Kasonge there were hardly ten villages where the *onjango* existed and retained its former functions. The reasons which my informants assigned are that the demands for road work (in the immediate region), for contract labour (involving absences of from six months to two years), and the difficulty of securing tax-money, did not leave the leisure required for the common meal in the *onjango*. When I made wider inquiries as to localities where the *onjango* now exists and retains its former functions, it seems that this institution is widely decadent. According to my information, the regions where it continues to function are chiefly in Ngalangi, in Viye, and

[1] *Ocilā* comes from the verb *oku cilā*, to dance.

[2] *Onjango* has been traced to the verb *oku vangula*, to converse, but I am doubtful of this derivation. It has been called 'The Palaver House', but this is an evident misnomer, for the *onjango* is much more than that.

[3] *Ombelela* is a word to cover any dish which may be eaten with the porridge staple. It may be meat, beans, mushrooms, or greens, and is preferred with gravy into which pieces of the stiff porridge may be dipped (*oku mina*).

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perhaps in Ndulu. In Ngendo the Men's Club had taken over the rocks just behind the headman's household for its meeting-place, but the meetings were only occasional and there was no common meal.

The Village Plan

To speak of the plan of an Umbundu village may seem a contradiction in terms, so haphazard seems the relation of houses, gardens, &c., to each other. Some houses are circular, but the majority are more nearly rectangular in shape. There is a palisade of hardwood sticks surrounding all the village except that side of the headman's household which is adjacent to the rocks used for a club-house. The headman had not bothered to keep up his own part of the fence since his only garden was a small tobacco plot fenced in by itself. The village is itself divided up by the palisades which shut off one compound from another, each compound containing the houses of from one to three households. Between the palisades are paths which lead on to the dancing floor and out of the village. In the village of Sekulu Sikilile there were twenty-five households with thirty-two houses in all. Each house (*onjo*) had its own granary (*onila*), and small chicken-coop built on stilts, and of all the houses only six had separate kitchens (*ocisuo*). Nearly every household had separate pens for the pigs, goats, and sheep for the night. At one side of the headman's compound there was a common corral for the nine cattle which the villagers owned. Only the headman had a spirit-hut (*etambo*), used also for a storehouse, for entertaining a guest, and for his own bedroom should he sleep apart from his wives. Within the several compounds were small gardens of tobacco and of maize and beans, and just outside the village were two separate tobacco gardens. Just a few paces to the west was a small patch of wheat belonging to a man in the smallest ward. There was one household of two houses quite outside the palisades appropriately belonging to a man named *Kulika* (meaning 'Being-alone'). The water-holes and pounding rocks where meal was ground were between the several units of the village and were used in common. The fields were off to the east at from thirty minutes' to an hour's walk. The two smaller wards of Ciyanda and Kanjengo were so small that they were like two or three compounds by themselves. The former had six households with eight houses, and the latter

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four households with six houses. The school village had been laid out in rectangular fashion without any palisade and with eucalyptus trees planted around the sides. The school was at the centre and the elder's house at the upper corner. These two larger buildings and one other were built of adobe, while the rest of the twelve houses were of wattle and daub, identical with those in the other wards except that all were rectangular. There were a few very small gardens watered by an irrigation ditch. The people of this village had river gardens, and their fields were mostly to the south between the village and the highway. Just to the east of the main village and beside one of the water-holes, a Roman Catholic catechist had established himself, but as yet he had neither village nor school.

The Villagers

Turning now to the people living in this village, it was interesting to find that all save the households of two former slaves and the Roman Catholic catechist, were related to each other, either by blood or by marriage. Sekulu Cipange of Ciyanda summed the matter up when he said, 'Likuluta Samikanjo (the Protestant elder) is my younger brother (*manjange*), for in our Umbundu country (we) people do not build together (i.e. in the same village) unless we are blood relatives.' In order to determine the exact relationships and other facts regarding the demography of this village, I took the names of all householders and their wives, and inquired their relationships to the elders of the respective wards. This information was supplied by Njomba, a son of Sekulu Sikilīlē, and by Sekulu Likuluta Samikanjo. In addition to those of the four elders, there were twenty-four households. The relationship of each of the householders to their respective elders may be summarized as follows:

A. *Paternal relatives*		
In Sikilīlē's village	21	
„ Ciyanda	1	
„ Kanjengo's ward	2	
„ School village	2	
	—	26
B. *Maternal relatives*		
In Ciyanda	1	
„ Kanjengo's ward	1	
„ School village	4	
	—	6

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C. *Sister's sons (or daughters)*[1]		
In Ciyanda	1	
„ School village	4	
	—	5
D. *Relatives by marriage*		
In Sikilile's	2	
„ School village	1	
	—	3
E. *Relationship not exactly determined*[2]		
In School village	2	
	—	2
F. *Former slaves*		
In Sikilile's	1	
„ School village	1	
	—	2
Total of householders		44

The above figures show more precisely than would several pages of explanation the family nature of the Umbundu village. That the Ovimbundu are patrilocal was noted by Hambly.[3] Whether the proportions which the above figures indicate would hold for all the Ovimbundu could only be determined by gathering similar data over widely representative areas. The same approximate distribution holds for the families represented by 192 genealogies and 74 marriage-schedules which I have collected. Matrilocal residence or residence in the wife's village has always been recognized by the Ovimbundu as a possibility, although less desirable than the ideal of patrilocal marriage and residence. Of the two householders in Sekulu Sikilile's village who were related to him by marriage, one was the husband of a daughter and the other a widow of a younger brother, who should have been inherited by a younger brother or a mother's brother of the deceased. Failing that, she might have returned to her father's people, but her having settled in the village of her husband's elder brother is no cause for surprise. My experience leads me to believe that Ngendo is an approximately fair sample of the present strength of patrilocal residence among the Ovimbundu. That the Protestant school village is a real part of this kinship unit is an important fact, the significance of which will be discussed later.

[1] The two daughters were widows who had come to live with their mother's brothers.

[2] In these two cases relationship was declared to exist, but I failed to find its nature.

[3] Hambly, op. cit., p. 191.

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Going on to the marital status of the villagers, I found that the forty-eight households were to be classified as follows:

Monogynous	27	(including 7 at the school)
Widowers (all formerly monogynous)	3	(„ 1 „)
Widows	7	(„ 4 „)
Young (unmarried) man	1	(at the school)
Polygynous	10	
Total	48	

Whether a similar proportion of monogynous to polygynous households would also be found more widely among the Ovimbundu is a question which could only be settled by extensive demographic studies.[1] My impression is that the proportion of polygynous to monogynous households is higher in the region of Kasonge than in other Umbundu areas for the following reasons:

1. The proximity of Kasonge to the Esele country which has long been a source of supply for concubines (slaves). (Five of the ten polygynous householders in Ngendo included at least one Esele concubine.)
2. The comparatively low bride-price in Kasonge as compared to other areas.

The South African Census for 1921 showed that at that time only one man in eight was polygynous.[2] My impression is that the proportion among the Ovimbundu is no greater and that economic factors will soon do away with any considerable polygyny.

In each of the ten polygynous households in Ngendo save one, there were only two wives or concubines. The one exception was

[1] The census of 1940 gives more reliable figures and more details than were previously available, but it does not provide a basis for studies of this order. The number or proportion of polygamous unions among the 'uncivilized population' was not recorded. For the whole colony, the division of the native population by sex is given as follows: males, 1,733,328, females, 1,932,501 (op. cit., vol. i, p. 78 f.); and for the Ovimbundu (*Mbundo*), as follows: males, 636,583, females, 694,504 (op. cit., vol. ix, p. 22 f.). 'Owing to the migration of labourers, and especially to the system known as contract labour', certain areas (of recruitment) show a large excess of females over males (as much as 4 to 1 in the 20–29 age-groups of certain areas), while certain (receiving) areas show a corresponding excess of males over females (4 to 1 in several areas and even 22 to 1 in one area, for the same age-groups) (op. cit., vol. iii, *passim*). On this subject, *vide* R. R. Kuczynski, *Colonial Population* (London, 1937), and *Population Movements* (ibid., 1936); both summarized in the *Rhodes-Livingstone Journal*, no. 2.

[2] Quoted by P. A. W. Cook, *The Education of a South African Tribe* (Cape Town; Juta, 1934), p. 3.

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the household of the headman Sikilile, who had had four wives and one young Esele concubine. At the time of my last visit (1936), however, there were only two wives and the concubine, one wife having died, and another having gone to her people.

To complete the picture of the villagers, their numbers were as follows:

Village	Men	Women	Children		Total
			Male	Female	
In Sikilile's village . .	24	35	31	37	127
In Ciyanda . . .	5	8	2	4	19
In Kanjengo . . .	3	6	3	1	13
At the School . . .	10	11	10	6	37
Total . . .	42	60	46	48	
	Adults: 102		Children: 94[1]		196

In Sikilile's village there were domestic animals as follows: 9 head of cattle, 13 goats, 20 sheep, 100 pigs, and about 100 chickens. There was practically no professional specialization; there were almost no specialists living in the village: no blacksmith or carpenter, no mat-maker, but only one 'hunter of meat', and three 'hunters of (bee-) hives'. As to the women, all could make baskets, and there were several who had made pottery, but were not doing so at the time.

Pigs, chickens, and dogs roamed the village, functioning as a D.S.C. and a sewer system combined. Were it not for these scavengers the villages of the Ovimbundu would present an even more untidy spectacle than is the case. There is no other regular disposal of refuse, nor are there any latrines or privies.[2]

It will be seen that there is practically no division of labour as between households: each is practically a self-contained unit. The

[1] It was reported that in addition to the children then living, these same households had lost 57 by death (29 males and 28 females).

[2] At Ngendo the school village had two or three enclosed pit privies. The Umbundu euphemism for defecate, 'go to the bush' (*oku enda kusenge*), is revealing. Even more revealing is a proverb which advises one not to burn his bridges behind him, but literally it runs as follows:

Nda wa lisinga kuti, Si endi konyima onjo,
Nda o ka sililã pi?

If you forswear yourself saying, I shall not go behind the house,
Then will you go (to) urinate where?

There is a more shocking version which, however, may not be really authentic.

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621 476 common meal was formerly a great bond of village unity. Mutual help within the village and the family group is practised on many occasions. There are a number of folk-tales designed to show the evil consequences of refusing to lend, whether beer-pots or more valued assistance. Many proverbs enjoin the necessity of prompt and effectual mutual helpfulness and co-operation, as e.g.

U o popela ukuavo ongandu ka lula.

[538] (He who saves another (from) a crocodile does not undress.)

476 The mechanism of co-operation, the round of daily life in village and field, together with the cycles of food and of work, are properly subjects of further study. Here the purpose is to show the definitely family nature of the village and of its life. To the [181] casual observer the Ovimbundu appear as severe individualists. Indeed, they are individualistic to a degree, but they have worked out mechanisms of mutual helpfulness and co-operation which functioned both on political lines under the aegis of the king and within the kinship units.

Social Life of the Village

517 521 562 The two foci of the village life are the Men's Club and the Dancing Floor. Even though no *onjango* may have been built, the Men's Club will find a place in which to carry on, at least when there may be fine weather. Leisure may be limited, but time for conversation will be found. Europeans often express wonder at the amount of conversation which goes on between Africans, for they cannot understand what people of apparently such limited opportunities and with what seems like so narrow an outlook may have to discuss at such great length. As for the Ovimbundu, there is nothing which is a greater hardship than lack of opportunity for conversation with their fellows. Under primitive conditions this is more especially true of the men, who, in their villages, are always surrounded by members of their own family group. Owing to their peculiar position in the village and their household pre-occupations, the women's social propensities may find less outlet in these public gatherings. When the villagers gather on the dancing floor and the gourds of beer go round, they always separate according to sex. Whether the occasion be formal or informal, I have seen the discussion carried to great lengths, with the pipe passed between the men, while the women sat silently by,

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A few words from the childhood recollections of Paulino Ngonga Liahuka[1] bring out the facts.

One day we noticed that Sekulu Upalandanda[2] and my father went to the mountain of Kalilonge saying, 'We go to look around (and find out) whether the spirits (*olosande*) have agreed to our moving there.' Then another day we saw that the fathers were coming out of the spirit huts (*atambo*, plural), with the sacred chests (*ovimbangu*, plural), saying, 'We go to start a new village.' When they had arrived under the mountain of Kalilonge, they said, 'The spirits have agreed.' Then when everyone had moved, the elder, whose name had been Upalandanda at Muenesi, now changed his name, declaring, 'I am *Cilembo-camunda* (Shadow of Mountain). From that time the place was called Cilembo.

On seeking a new site the headman's fire in the old village is put out and the procession starts: a girl carries the sacred chest (*ocimbangu*) containing the relics (*ociye*) and the balls of iguana skin, and a boy the sacred bows.[3] They lead the way to the site selected where they cut a pole[4] suitable for a house-wall (*ekoso*), and tie a leaf of the *upu*[5] tree to it, dig a hole into which they put mud made by rain-water (*onata yondombo*),[6] and then together they lift the stick and let it fall into the hole. This is the beginning of the spirit hut (*etambo*), the first house to be built on the new site. The boy and the girl must take part ceremonially in each operation of building the hut. After that they together ignite (*oku tiafula*)[7] the new fire. A hen and a cock are killed, cooked on the new fire, and eaten inside the *etambo* by all who have taken part in the building. The headman and his wife cannot return to the old village but must camp at the new site (*itula*) and keep the new fire alight.

In building their houses, the villagers may commute (*oku usala*) from the old site, but often the distance is too great to do this, and

[1] Of Ciya'ka, ordained pastor of Elende Church in 1930. He was Hambly's chief informant.

[2] Sekulu Upalandanda was the younger brother of Ngonga's father's father, and therefore grandfather to Ngonga.

[3] The bow (*ohonji*) of each ascendant who is now a guardian spirit (*osande*) of the family.

[4] When this first pole is cut, the axe should first be pointed toward the cardinal directions.

[5] A leaf of the *upu* tree is used in the divorce ceremony. Its use here is a sign of divorce from the old site.

[6] Literally, 'mud of the rainy season'.

[7] This was formerly done with a fire drill (*vide* Hambly, op. cit., Plate XXXV), but not for a number of years now. When I showed the above picture to a group of 150 young men of 17 to 25 years of age, not one of them even knew what it was.

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therefore the usual procedure is to erect temporary grass-covered huts (*olosingi*, plural) on the new site, in which they will live while building their houses. Each hearth-fire must be ignited from the headman's fire.

The houses are built by the occupants themselves. The men's club house is built by the communal labour of all men and boys with a simple ritual designed to promote concord within, and to ensure that the spirits (*olosande*) may find it a congenial abode. The spirits regularly attend the discussions in the *onjango*, and there receive their daily portions. There also they are believed to sleep.

At the first opportunity a hunt will be held and the meat brought to the spirit-hut. The girl who carried the sacred chest receives the heart and the boy the head. At this time, while a pot of sour beer (non-alcoholic) (*ocisangua*) is being brewed, the girl sits quietly in communion (*oku felevela*) with the spirits. With these physical and spiritual preparations the village community makes ready its home, a home which may seem poor and meagre to the eyes of outsiders, but to a member of the community it is home indeed and evokes in him, when absent, a feeling of great home-sickness (*ongeva*). As the Umbundu version of 'Home, Sweet Home' puts it:

Koliene, koliene, nda ku li ombambi ha yota
To your own, to your own, if there is cold you can warm yourself,

nda ku li onjala ha panga.
if there is hunger you can arrange.

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593 only by a sister), and *mukãi* (sister, spoken only by a brother). In
[561] a polygynous household each of the wives is mother to all the children and each of the children is *huva* or *manja*[1] to all the others.
848 Illegitimate children are not stigmatized but since they belong to
567 the mother they have a distinct designation.[2] Slaves or former slaves have a status within the household and village which to the ordinary observer does not differ from that of the children: they are treated much as the children and they may carry on in all matters social and economic much as though they were members of the family. I have noticed, however, that when there is a call for labour, the lot falls oftener to one of these 'children-born-by-day'[3] whether he was a war-captive or a pawn.

567 Both slavery and the polygynous household, two institutions
595 manifestly and intimately inter-related, are still a part of the
178 Umbundu social structure, but neither the one nor the other now has the importance which it formerly had. Neither of these institutions is part of the present and personal experience of the great majority of Umbundu households.

Kinship

596 *Blood Relatives* (*Epata*). The relationships of the wider kinship
602 groups are for the most part extensions of those of the household.
621 The child learns them very early in life owing to the fact that the village community into which he is born is only a part of this larger kinship group. Nearly all of the villagers belong to the same *epata* or extended family, which includes both lines of descent. Most of them belong to the father's family (*oluse*), and the mother's family (*oluina*) may also be represented. The fact is that most of the adults of the village are father or mother to nearly every child and most of the children are brothers or sisters. Those of his coevals who do not bear this relation to him are otherwise related and are also potential spouses or potential relatives-in-law.

[1] This distinction *yesepakai* (lit. 'of the jealousy of women') may be made but it is not applied in ordinary speech.

[2] *Omõlã a ngenda-la-ina* (lit. 'child of goes-with-mother').

[3] *Omõlã-vo-citiwa-lutanya*. Cf. 'child of my calves', Luganda expression and attitudes, L. P. Mair, *An African People in the Twentieth Century* (London, 1934), p. 32 f.

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Kinship groupings: *oluse* and *oluina*.[1] Every Ocimbundu belongs to an *oluse*, i.e. his father's kin, and to an *oluina*, i.e. his mother's kin. Each of these family groupings is divided into male and female lines (*onēlē yohonji*, 'the side of the bow'; *onēlē yohumba*, 'the side of the basket'). Uterine brothers and sisters belong to the same *oluse* and *oluina*, and to the male or female 'side' respectively, according to sex. It is of great importance to get a clear idea of this bilateral nature of these kinship groupings. Every student of ethnology will note the similarity of this division to the Herero *oruzo* and *eanda*.[2] Considering the affinities between the Herero and Umbundu languages, I think that these conceptions are probably related. Further study of other peoples of this Western Bantu zone may reveal cultural and racial as well as linguistic affinities.[3] The *oluse* and *oluina* of the Ovimbundu follow their own pattern.

The *oluse* consists of a large number of local village groups, some of which recognize mutual relationships, but with no recognized headship save in the case of the several royal families. The only suggestion of any totemic relation or origin is with the royal families which have in common several taboos with regard to certain animals the flesh of which may not be eaten, nor the skins used, &c. Chief of these animals are the *ongulungu* (bushbuck, *Tragelaphus scriptus*), the *ocisema*[4] (the waterbuck, *Cobus defessa*

[1] *Olu-se*, perhaps 'the place of father', the root *se* being equivalent to the forms *se*, *so*, *isio*; *olu-ina*, perhaps 'the place of mother'.

[2] See Vedder, pp. 185 ff. (in *The Native Tribes of South West Africa*): 'The Herero nation is divided into 2 large family groups . . . the Herero belongs to the *oruzo* of his father and also to the *eanda* of his mother.' J. Irle, *Die Herero* (Gutersloh, 1906), pp. 87–93.

[3] An interesting study of the VaNyaneka, one of the cattle-rearing people living between Ambo and Umbundu territory, was recently published: A. Lang et C. Tastevin, *La Tribu des Va-Nyaneka* (Mission Rohan-Chabot, Tome V), Corbeil: Impr. Créto. This volume was not available in England or the U.S.A. until 1940, and could not therefore have been used in the present study. I may now say, however, that the authors' treatment of the social structure is not such that it would help to solve the problem in question. The clans are described only from the standpoint of totemism. The maternal line of descent (*e-anda*) is briefly mentioned (p. 45), but not the corresponding paternal line. The authors' evident lack of familiarity with other Bantu material is a great drawback. The system used for the transcription of the vernacular is most confusing, owing to an evident lack of understanding of the Bantu phonetic and grammatical genius with consequent procrustean attempts to force it into foreign forms.

[4] The king's sons may not eat flesh of the *ocisema* lest they should *sema sema*, 'have an impediment of speech'. This may be simply a taboo on grounds of *similia similibus* (or the obverse).

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

penricei), and *ovinyama viakasa* (animals having paws, from the lion down). No other *oluse* has any such rules. The chief function of the *oluse* is as a local residence group. Within the *oluse* there is no inheritance of property but only succession to office, which from the king to the village headman is from father to son, or from elder to younger brother, with only as much recognition of primogeniture as belongs to the general idea of the hierarchy of age. Succession to office is further affected by the democratic tendencies already noted with regard to the kingly succession.[1] The character of the *oluse* as a series of local groups is further borne out by the character of its priesthood, which lies wholly with the village headmen.

The *oluina* is not a local group, since its members for the most part live in the villages of their several lines of paternal descent—each with his *oluse*. When an Ocimbundu speaks of his family (*epata*) in the sense of a large and widespread organization with a recognized head in some elder, it is generally his *oluina* to which he refers. This family elder (*ukulu wepata*) is generally both the legal and spiritual head of the family. He is the family high-priest in charge of the spirit-hut (*etambo*) of the family guardian spirit (*osande*)[2] of whom there may be more than one and of whom he may become one after death. This family head is generally the eldest in the maternal line. In these days the priestly and the legal functions may be divided considering the advantages of having for legal head one who knows the ways of this world, while the spiritual head needs rather to be acquainted with the spirit-world. Property is inherited through the *oluina* from mother's brother to sister's son.[3] Only the *oluina* is an organization in the wider or more than local sense, and it is to it that the children belong. Formerly the mother's elder brother had great powers over his sister's sons and was even able to pawn them or sell them into slavery to meet his own debts.[4] The patrilocal household is

[1] See *supra*, p. 22 f.

[2] The head of an *oluina* may or may not be a village headman. In case he is, he will be priest of two lines and have two spirit-huts. There may be more than one spirit-hut in a single village.

[3] This fact was noted by A. Bastos, *Traços Geraes sôbre a Ethnografia do Districto de Benguella* (Lisboa, 1909), p. 33 (par. 39°).

[4] This has been noted by a number of writers. Bastos, op. cit., p. 29 (par. 26°) adds that once a father has redeemed his son, the maternal uncle can never sell him again. Cf. *avunculi potestas* among the Ba-Ila, E. W. Smith and A. M. Dale, *The Ila-Speaking Peoples* (London, 1920), vol. i, p. 320.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13

there must be a responsible senior and, hence as a matter of course, the following is accepted:

Ndalu hokuluko la Vava:
Fire is not older than water:

Ciyo wa pindikapo.
Potsherd (or frying-pan) passes between (i.e. keeps the peace).

As potsherd (or frying-pan) keeps water from putting out fire and fire from consuming water, so the elder keeps the peace between the young of relatively equal status.

The hierarchy of age is taken as a matter of course and circumcision camps or other formal 'schools' are not considered necessary to reinforce an attitude which no one would dream of disputing. At the present time there is quite a vogue for circumcision camps (*vakuevamba*) in the southern or south-eastern half of the country. Some affirm that these are new-fangled notions coming in from neighbouring tribes. Others declare the institution to be very old. The Ngalangi people say that they have always had both *evamba* for the boys and *uso wakãi* for the girls. Some tribes require *evamba* of the king before he may rule. Even where the institution is not in vogue, there are associations of coevals (*vakuacisoko*) whose members have definite rights and duties toward each other. These matters are treated more fully in a later chapter. Inasmuch as these age-grade sets are both age and sex divisions, they contain some elements of social cleavage, but their association with the economic and political sides of life makes them a strongly cohesive force for society.

Umbundu Social Structure: Summary

Summarizing the evidence of the present chapter, I wish only to tie in a few of the more important threads so that the pattern of the Umbundu social structure may be seen at a glance.

Although the Ovimbundu no longer maintain the political life which formerly existed, there are elements of cohesion which still give reality to their social organism. These elements all centre in or spring from the kinship group.

With regard to the village, two facts stand out:

1. The Umbundu village is a local kinship unit, with the villagers quite literally the children of the headman-patriarch.
2. Although its political, religious, and social functions may be

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

182 in a somewhat decadent state, the Umbundu village has up
●621 to the present maintained its status as a local kinship unit.

182 The household is not a solitary unit but a part of the village.
592 Since it is constituted by marriage, it embodies the union of at
602 least two kinship groups. The attitudes and behaviour patterns within the Umbundu household are basically those universally recognized. In common with the households of most Bantu cultures, it differs from the European model in that it extends its attitudes and behaviour patterns to the wider kinship groupings by means of a classificatory system of relationship.

613 In the wider kinship groupings (*epata*), the Ovimbundu recognize
182 both the maternal (*oluina*) and the paternal (*oluse*) lines of descent. The functions of the latter have been largely local, residential, social, and religious, with succession (of status) in the male line. The function of the former has been cohesive over a larger territory, with a recognized head in whom has been vested both religious and economic functions. Both his office and the inheritance of property descend in the female line. Much of the power, economic and personal, formerly held by the *oluina*, in the person of the mother's brother, seems to be passing at the present time to the *oluse*, in the person of the father. The bilineal kinship system has been a strongly cohesive social force.

182 The form of marriage practised by the Ovimbundu is of the
[582] two-way cross-cousin type in both lines of kin and in three generations. It seems to be an individual type developed in the particular social and economic situation of the Ovimbundu. As a contract between two families and as a new venture, the marriage relation demands that great attention be given to attitudes and behaviour patterns which emphasize mutual respect.

[561] The hierarchy of age is a very real factor in the Umbundu social structure. Age-set 'schools' have not existed generally throughout the tribes, but there are associations of coevals. This is largely a cohesive force.

754 Sorcery is the most important disruptive force at work *within* Umbundu society. Working as it does, within kinship groups, and inasmuch as it seems to be on the increase, sorcery embodies a real danger to social cohesion.

184 Homogeneity has never been an attribute of the Ovimbundu as
178 regards their racial or cultural make-up. The slave-trade injected other and more diverse elements, and recent movements and

582 incest *(oku ndo)*. But one may marry relatives of one's own age-level who belong to classes other than those mentioned, i.e. cross-cousins and, on other age-levels, father's sister or sister's daughter. It is said that formerly marriage never took place except between persons who could trace relationship in this way. Today this principle is very liberal in its application.(1) (It would be interesting to have estimates of the number of men who do marry first degree cross-cousins, father's sisters, or sister's daughters, as distinct from classificatory relatives of these classes, and the number who marry outside the *oluse* or *oluina*.)

583 Marriage was formerly arranged by the mother's brother (i.e. by the *oluina*), but today there is a tendency for fathers to arrange their daughters' marriages and to receive their marriage payment. (And also, occasionally, to assist their sons in providing marriage payment.)(2) *Ilombo*, or marriage payment, was formerly paid in cattle, blankets etc.(3) Today it is usually paid in cash, the amount being determined by the status of the bride.(4)

Polygyny

● 621 595 In the sample village (Ngendo, Kasongi chiefdom) described by Childs, of a total of 48 households,

(a) 10 households were polygynous; of these 9 contained only 2 wives or concubines, and the tenth, that of the headman, contained four wives and one concubine,

(b) 27 households were monogynous, and 3 more were occupied by widowers, all formerly monogynous. (The remaining households were occupied by 7 widows and one young unmarried man.)

Childs notes that the proportion of polygynous households in Kasongi chiefdom is probably higher than in other parts of Ovimbundu country for two reasons: the comparatively low marriage-payment in Kasongi as compared with other areas, and the proximity of Kasongi to Esele country, which has long been a source of supply for slave concubines. (Of the 10 polygynous households in Ngendo 5 contained at least 1 Esele concubine.)(5)

Avoidance between in-laws

602 Mutual respect *(esunbilo)* between the two kin groups involved is considered a necessary basis for a successful marriage, and is the reason given for the various avoidances *(oku liyuvuila)* enjoined upon the principals and their respective relatives. These avoidances may be summarised:-

593 (a) A husband and wife must avoid using each other's names.

602 (b) The term *ndatembo* is used for parents-in-law of either sex, and reciprocally for sons-in-law or daughters-in-law. The term is extended to all those whom one's spouse calls "mother", "father" or "child" (Childs, p.52) and apparently also to those whom one's spouse calls *sanu, tatekai* or

(1) Childs, p.54.
(2) Fanis, 1945.
(3) Cushnan, 1944, p.45.
(4) Childs, personal communication.
(5) Childs, page 30.

were polygynous and only one of these contain more than two wives.(1)

The village or imbo (plural *ovaimbo*) may consist of from 5 to 500 such households, the heads of which are usually related agnatically to each other. Most, but not all, of the larger villages are *olombala* (villages of chiefs or sub-chiefs). These are said to have had formerly as many as 5,000 inhabitants,(2) but today few have as many as 3,000, and there is a general tendency towards smaller villages and even isolated households.(3) There are in general two quite different types of Umbundu village according to the terrain on which they are built. Those on the plains, where there is room to spread out, tend towards a circular shape, with the *ocila* and *onjango* (see below) near the centre. The various sections of the village may appear as quarters of a single whole, or they may be spread out haphazardly. Mountain villages(4) may have houses built on ledges almost one on top of the other. Here there is often no room or no suitable soil within the palisades for gardens or for the dancing-floor *(ocila)*, which are found outside the palisade. Different sections of the village tend to string themselves out horizontally along the mountain-side, or to find successive ledges.

The typical village of Ngendo described by Childs, in Kasongi chiefdom, *etumbu* (sub-chiefdom) of Ekongo, is of an intermediate type, built on a slope. Ngendo has 196 inhabitants, of whom 42 are men, 60 are women, and 94 children. The village is divided into four smaller sections or wards (*ovitawila* pl.), of which the largest, that of the village headman *(sekulu)* has 127 inhabitants, while the other three have 19, 13 and 37 inhabitants respectively. The word *imbo* (village) may also be used for either of the two larger sections by themselves. Each section has its own elder, but the dancing-floor *(ocila)*, which is the centre of village life, is in the headman's section. The *ocila* is primarily a place for recreation, but religious functions also are held in it, and formal cases tried. Formerly most villages had a second communal building, the *onjango* or "Men's Club House",(5) whose importance was almost as great as that of the *ocila*. Here all the men, youths and boys gathered for the evening meal, and here guests were entertained, lesser judicial cases settled, and the day's work and gossip discussed, while young boys, sitting in the background, gained much of their knowledge of tribal history and custom.(6) Today the *onjango* exists and maintains its former function chiefly in parts of Ngalangi, Viye and possibly Ndulu. It does not exist in Childs' typical village, where the "Men's Club" holds only occasional meetings on the rocks behind the headman's house, and where the common evening meal no longer takes place. The reason suggested for the disappearance of the *onjango* is lack of leisure owing to demands for road work (in the immediate vicinity of Ngendo), for contract labour, involving absences of from six months to a year,(7) and the difficulty of securing tax-money.

(1) And polygyny is thought to be more frequent here than in other areas. See above, p.23.
(2) According to Magyar, 1851.
(3) Childs, op.cit., p.25, fn.1. Childs does not suggest any reason for this tendency.
(4) Formerly many villages were built on mountains for defence, and capital villages of this type may still be seen.
(5) The "Men's Club" seems to be simply a gathering of all the adult men (and possibly also the juveniles) of the village.
(6) Childs, op.cit.; Cushman, 1944; Hambly, (2) 1934.
(7) Most of the labour on the Benguella Railway is Umbundu, and many Ovimbundu travel to the Union of South Africa for work. (Childs, op.cit., p.10, et.al.)

Ngendo is surrounded by a stick palisade except on that side of the headman's household which is adjacent to the rocks used as a club-house. The village itself (and each section) is divided up into compounds, each of which contains one to three houses,(1) and palisades divide one compound from the next; between are paths leading to the *ocila* and out of the village. Small gardens for tobacco, maize and beans are within the compounds, and the larger fields lie outside the village at from thirty minutes' to an hour's walk. In the headman's section of Ngendo there are 25 households containing 32 houses in all. Each house has its own granary *(osila)* and a small chicken-coop built on stilts, and of all the houses only six have separate kitchens *(ociwo)*. Most households had separate pens for pigs, goats and sheep for the night,(2) and at one side of the headman's compound there is a common corral for the nine cattle owned by the section. Only the headman had a spirit-hut *(etambo)*, used also as a storehouse, for entertaining his guests, and for his own use should he wish to sleep apart from his wives.

Chiefs' villages or *olombala* (singular *ombala*) are often surrounded by a belt of tall trees.(3) The chief's compound (the *ilombe*) is larger than those of other villagers, and, according to Hambly,(4) usually contains: the chief's house, which always has a separate sleeping-room; a house and a kitchen for each of his wives; a tomb for the burial of the chief and his wives; a house of meditation for the chief, and pens for pigs and chickens.

Umbundu houses are usually circular, but sometimes rectangular, and made of wattle and daub, with thatched roofs. Sometimes huts are divided by matting into a living-room and a sleeping-room. Cooking is often done in the house itself, but sometimes a separate hut is built as a kitchen.(5)

The *onjango* (the Men's Club House) consists of a cone-shaped roof set on stout hardwood poles instead of a wall, and left open so that those for whom there may be no place inside may still see and hear what takes place within.(6)

Villages are moved when fields are exhausted and others are not available nearby(7) or, more often, when there has been illness or death in the village, which implies that some action displeasing to the spirits has been committed. (No information is available concerning the usual length of life of a village.) When the new site is chosen, the headman's fire in the old village is extinguished, and a procession starts, led by a boy carrying the sacred bows *(ohonji)* of each ascendant who is now a guardian spirit of the family (i.e. the *oluse*), and a girl carrying the sacred chest *(ocimbangu)* containing the relics *(ociye)* and the balls of iguana skin.(8) On arriving at the site the boy and girl cut and plant the

(1) In this section there were 13 goats, 20 sheep, 100 pigs and about 100 chickens. (Childs, op.cit. p.31) (2) Ibid.
(3) Hambly, (2) 1934, p.206 *et.al.* It was a custom of the Ngangela peoples to plant trees round the village and dedicate them to deceased chiefs. (See McCulloch 1950, p.68.) There is no evidence that the trees surrounding Umbundu villages have any ritual significance, although the custom may have been taken over from the conquered Ngangela peoples.
(4) Op.cit., p.208. (5) Ibid., p.10
(6) Childs, personal communication.
(7) Due often to European settlement. (8) See below, p.47.

On arriving at the site the boy and girl cut and plant the first pole, which is to be a part of the new *etambo* (spirit hut). The boy and girl must take part ceremonially in each operation of building the hut, and when it is built they ignite the new fire. A hen and a cock are killed, cooked on the new fire, and eaten inside the *etambo* by all who have taken part in building it. The headman and his wife must remain on the new site to keep the fire alight; other villagers may commute from the old village or erect temporary grass shelters on the new site. Houses are built by the occupants themselves, although men may give each other mutual help, for which there is a gift of food and beer. The *onjango* is usually built by the communal labour of all boys and men, and on its completion a simple ritual is performed to promote harmony within and to welcome the spirits, who are believed to sleep in the *onjango* and to take part in all discussions within it.(1)

The village group: composition

Childs describes the relationship of the villagers of Ngendo to each other as typical of Umbundu country. Most of the heads of households are related agnatically to their respective section-heads (who are presumably also related agnatically to each other, since the village is based on the *oluse* group); Childs does not however discuss the relation of section heads to each other or to the village headman. He gives a table in which the householders are divided into six categories according to their relationship to their various section-heads:

1.	Paternal relatives of section head:	Section A (headman's)	21
		" B	2
		" C	1
		" D	2
			26
2.	Maternal relatives of section head:	Section B	4
		" C	1
		" D	1
			6
3.	Sisters' sons (or daughters)(2)	Section B	4
		" C	1
			5
4.	Relatives by marriage	Section A	2
		" B	1
			3
5.	Relationship not definitely known	Section B	2
6.	Former slaves	Section A	1
		" B	1
			2

(1) This section is based on Childs, 1949, pp.37-9.
(2) Who could, of course, have been included as maternal relatives *and* paternal relatives, since they belong both to the *oluse* and to the *olusio*.

621 The total number of households is 44, or 48 including those of the four section heads. It should be noted that there is a discrepancy in Child's figures (apart from an obvious misprint):(1) in another context he writes that section B contains only 12 houses (not even *households*), while from this table it would appear that section B has 15 household heads, including that of the section head; and section C is said to have 6 households, while only 4 (again counting the section head) are accounted for in this table.

591 Childs states(2) that the incidence of patrilocal marriage in Ngendo is fairly typical of Umbundu country, but unfortunately gives little information regarding the relationship of the various spouses to each other or concerning the location of the villages from which they came. Matrilocal marriage is recognised as a possibility: of the three relatives by marriage listed above, one was a husband of a daughter of the headman, another the widow of a younger brother of the headman, who should have been inherited by a younger brother (?) or a mother's brother of the deceased, or, failing that, could have returned to her father's village. Of those listed above as sisters' children, two were widows who had come to live in the village with their mother's brothers.(3)

POLITICAL STRUCTURE

The village headman(4)

622 The village headman *(sekulu yimbo)* is also the head of the *oluse* which forms the nucleus of the village group, and is related agnatically 793 to most of the householders. He alone may speak of the village as *imbo liange* (my village); the heads of sections, who are also called *sekulu*(5) 782 may speak possessively only of their own sections *(ocitiwila cange)*, and other villagers speak only of "our village" *(imbo lietu)*.(6) The headman functions as both priest and legal head of the village. As priest he has in his compound the *etambo* (spirit hut), in which the insignia of office are kept, and in which he prays to the ancestral spirits. Upon occasion he may sleep there, usually offering a prayer to the spirits when he wakes during the night. The *etambo* may also be [346] used as a lodging place for respected guests, or as a store-house for possessions not used every day. Childs states that he officiates at regular village worship, including agricultural festivals; Hambly adds that he may lead the people in offering sacrifices when epidemics of 613 sickness break out in the village. It has been noted above(7) that it is the function of the *oluina* head to lead such rituals when illness occurs within the *oluina*. In general the village head is responsible for [622] matters - particularly agriculture and public health - which affect the whole village; individuals, both for protection and for help and other

(1) Childs, op.cit., p.28, line 27, where "twenty-four" should read "forty-four".
(2) On the basis of the 192 genealogies and 74 marriage-schedules which he collected. He does not, unfortunately, give examples or show how the comparison was made.
(3) Based on Childs, op.cit., pp.25-31.
(4) This section is based on Childs, op.cit., pp.36-7.
(5) It has been noted above that *sekulu* is used for all men (and some women) of the grandfather's generation.
(6) op.cit., p.283. (7) p.18.

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

114 trative posts. I agree that people between Caconda and Huila
101 represent a racial mixture of the Ovimbundu and the Ovambo. The record speaks of painting-houses for girls at Cabinda, an item which agrees with reports from other sources. The jottings concerning tribes from Cabinda to the far south of Angola are too vague to be used in ethnological work with confidence.

There are many points on which the work of A. Schachtzabel should be consulted for the purpose of making comparisons with my
● [621] own observations. The chief of these are a note and photograph on
[281] village construction (p. 130); the musical bow (p. 32); the loom
[775] (plate VI); transmigration of the soul of a chief into an animal (p. 51);
[524] and the game of mancala (p. 52). My observations of initiation at
[881] Katoko, Ngalangi, and Cangamba agree well with that of Schachtzabel at Katoko, but I was able to obtain more detail and more
[283] numerous photographs of the ritual of initiation. The spinning of cotton (p. 143) is exactly the process so frequently witnessed now at Elende. Iron-working (p. 111) appears to be comparable with the technique at Elende, but Schachtzabel seems to have missed the ritual. I was not so fortunate as this author in finding the old type of iron-smelting furnace in use.

114 The work of Statham is devoted primarily to hunting and descrip-
136 tions of plant and animal life. The chapter given to a casual description of people among whom he passed is not useful as ethnology; but the book is of service in providing a background of natural history. Information on the tsetse fly in Angola (p. 294) assists ethnological work by showing the determining effect of this biological factor.
[231] Presence of the fly is prohibitive to cattle-keeping, therefore cattle are not kept along the river courses which are infested with this pest.

114 Alexander Barns made no pretence of writing more than a travel book; nevertheless he publishes photographs of ethnological value, gives useful historical summaries, and deals with economic problems of production and transportation.

114 Tucker's book "Drums in the Darkness," though written to
175 interest the American public in mission work, contains many ethnological statements. The chief of these relate to the structure of the compound (p. 37); the dress of women (p. 39); naming of twins and triplets; and other items which agree well with data from the district in which I worked. There are notes on drum signals (p. 74) and
[202] cannibalism (p. 77). Apparently drum signals were in use at Bihé half a century ago. Forty years ago a slave was killed and eaten
[266] at the installation ceremonies for a new king, a point that was noted

S: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

361 At the present time one type of village is surrounded by stout stakes ten or more feet high set in a roughly circular plan. The arrangement of alleyways within the village is complicated without following any symmetrical plan. A visitor sees only a labyrinth of passages between high poles, with here and there a rectangular wooden 417 gate at intervals along the passages. The door itself is made from 335 four stout heavy planks which are roughly hewn and as a rule undecorated, but occasionally I have seen the panels of a door carved with [531] designs representing the breasts of a woman; or there may have been simple geometrical patterns. The top ends of the door panels are massive spheres of wood bored through with holes. Through the holes in the tops of these panels a pintle is passed in such a way that the door is suspended from above. During the daytime the lower ends of the panels are raised to the level of the lintel. They are there supported on a Y-shaped upright which is erected in front of the doorway. At night the planks are removed from this support and allowed to hang downward in the doorway. There is a sliding crosspiece to push over the lower ends. The same arrangement is sometimes used to make a door for a hut. This old type of village doorway, common twenty years ago, is becoming increasingly rare.

342 The house of a king or a chief is larger than that of a commoner. 644 The enclosure which contains a king's house and the other buildings 621 is named *elombe*, while *epandavailo* is the word used to describe the entrance to this compound. The *elombe* is built by men and women who receive no payment. There is a ceremony when the compound is opened. The house of the chief, Kandimba Sanjahulu, near Bailundu, is rectangular, with mud walls raised on a platform of earth and stones. Whitewash has been applied to the outside of the walls and some ornament is given in the form of painted blue crosses. [113] Complete study of structural types and the planning of internal divisions has been made by F. and W. Jaspert, of the Städtisches Völkermuseum, Frankfort.

644 At a village near Cuma the house of the chief differed from the dwellings of commoners in being somewhat larger. The house had been abandoned, not because the chief died there, but because the chieftainship had been transferred to an adjacent village. The tomb, which will be described in connection with funeral rites, was a few yards from the house. This mausoleum was surrounded by a high wooden palisade, to a stake of which were attached the horns of an ox killed at the funeral feast, while the jawbone lay in the enclosure

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

338 feet. A trench about eighteen inches deep is dug for the poles (*akoso*), which form the framework. The wattle work is tied to the uprights with strong strips of red bark before the plastering is begun.
341 The old type of Umbundu house was round, but most of the houses
171 now show a transition to square or rectangular forms (Plate XLIV, Fig. 2).

[531] Exterior wall-painting is found only in the northern districts of Angola (Plate LXXXIX, Fig. 2). Between Saurimo and Malange in the north, rectangular, painted houses are frequently seen. Wall-painting is a cultural trait from the Congo region where that form of decoration is common.

796
621 The method of forming a village site and the right of the chief to allot land have been described. The house of the chief is the first to be erected. There is drinking of beer to celebrate the completion of the village, and the pots of beer have to be stirred with the claws of chickens; these have been killed to provide blood for sprinkling the walls of the new houses. Village chiefs go through the process of stirring and drinking. The medicine-man drinks first, then he offers the cup to the chief.

344 The communal house is built by the united efforts of all men of
476 the village. Ngonga says, "The king never helps with any of the
[485] building, but he talks very much." The guest house is also built
644 by communal labor. The king of the *ombala* of Ngalangi told me that a king always uses the house of his predecessor, which must not be pulled down. No repairs are permitted and the house is used until it is absolutely untenable.

354 The interior of a commoner's house has three hearth stones in the
342 middle of the floor, which is of hard mud beaten down with a heavy wooden implement called *ocikandulo*. The ceremonial placing of the stones has been described in discussing marriage. There is no chimney, consequently the walls and roof are blackened with smoke. The junction of roof and walls provides pockets for the reception of small articles. On the floor near the walls may be several large beer pots. The dark smoky interior is almost intolerable. The sleeping
352 room is sometimes separated from the living room by matting. The bed is made from a cross-work of sticks supported on four Y-shaped posts, one at each corner. On the bed are coarse sleeping mats and possibly a modern blanket.

356 The miscellaneous contents of the hut are gourds, dippers, cooking
252 pots of several sizes, pounders, and baskets. In many of the huts I found cooking going on in the general room, but frequently a sepa-

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

[1874-1911]

not now possible for field work to supply the gaps in the written material.[72]

The traditional kinship system had neither clans nor segmenting lineages. The patrilineal group (*oluse*) was localized in a village, the group head being at the same time a village headman. Patrilineal ties do not seem to have been recognized between villages.[73] This social independence of the agnatically united village was reflected in the surrounding palisade, in the close clustering of the houses (nowadays much more spread out) and in the village institutions of the dancing-floor and the men's house (*ondjango*). It was here that all the men and boys, from seven or eight up, ate. Hastings writes, 'Each woman, after preparing the meal, takes or sends the portion which is for the male members of her family. This food is common property. As soon as enough has arrived some responsible member among the men will have it divided among the boys. For days a man may never taste of the food which is prepared by his wife.'[74] The men's house was also a club, and a court-room, where minor cases were decided. It was through this localized body of patrikin that an individual claimed land and residence rights and through it that he participated in the political system.[75]

The matrilineal group (the *oluina*) was composed of the descendants of a common great-great-grandmother.[76] According to Childs, it had a head who might also at times be a village headman,[77] and it was presumably the matrilineal group head who settled the disputes over property which Hambly says

[72] For an attempt at reconstructing Umbundu kinship on the basis of Childs's book see J. A. Barnes's review of *Umbundu Kinship and Character* in *Man*, 1950, pp. 126–128. It may be mentioned that the terms 'the side of the bow' and 'the side of the basket' are used simply to mean 'patrilateral kin' and 'matrilateral kin' (Dr. Childs, private information, and my own inquiries).

[73] A rather ambiguous phrase in Childs p. 43 ('The *oluse* consists of a large number of local village groups'), which might be interpreted as meaning that villages were patrilineally grouped into clans, seems really to mean simply that the village is the *oluse* unit.

[74] Hastings, p. 77.

[75] Ibid., p. 16. Childs, pp. 43–44.

[76] Hastings, p. 83, states that the matrilineal group consists of the descendants of a common great-great-great-grandmother (that is, five generations), and on p. 91 says that it consists of a group 'linked by a common great-great-grandmother'.

[77] Childs, p. 44.

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government headman is not the same person as the traditional headman he may become involved in quarrels unless he is careful to accept the position of the traditional headman; and both government headman and traditional headman may find it wise to be on good terms with the catechist and the elder of the school.

It is fairly simple to define the obligations of the government headman. Discussing the position of the traditional headman vague words such as 'influence' and 'prestige' must be used to describe a vague position. Indeed a purely synchronic picture would be inadequate, since the present position of the traditional headmen and the contemporary village organization must be understood against a historical background.

3. *Headmen and Their Villages*

In the time of the rubber trade the village headman was both the leader of a body of agnatic kinsmen and the representative of his village in the wider political system, the village headmen sitting with the chief to judge cases. Both Childs and Hambly emphasize the importance of the judicial role of the village headmen. Childs states that the village headman was also a ritual leader, being responsible for 'regular village worship including agricultural festivals'.[16] I have found no evidence of such ceremonies on a village basis. The only ritual which, according to my older informants, the village headman should perform for his people is communing with his ancestor spirits in the spirit hut during a village hunt, and this information was not confirmed by all my older informants. It may be added that I found no evidence of any installation rite for a new headman.

It may be assumed that a good deal of the old village structure survived till the middle or end of the 1930's. Dr. Childs in his description of the village of Ngendo (Cassongue) as it was in 1935–6 indicated that agnatic kinship was the main principle of village recruitment, and that this was typical of other Umbundu villages.[17] In Gumba it was still possible at this time

[16] Childs, p. 46.

[17] Ibid., pp. 25–37.

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for individuals to build up large villages—thus Simbwyikoka encouraged people to settle at Mwekalia to make it a large village. It may also be suggested that the power of the village headmen was to some extent linked with the power of the chief, since the headmen were associated politically with the chief, and would from this, tend to gain authority in their dealings with their fellow villagers. The village headmen also lacked any real competition from other types of leadership. Mbati had kept relations with the post in his own hands, and there were therefore no government headmen. The first catechist had arrived in Mbati's village in 1928, but cannot have met with much lasting success as there are few baptized Christians over thirty-five in Gumba.

Other factors at the time strengthening the position of the village headmen were the low rate of labour migration[18] and the fact that practically every man over forty at the time of Simbwyikoka's accession had participated in the rubber trade. This meant that many of the best known caravan leaders were still in full vigour, and enjoyed a prestige based on the first-hand knowledge of the middle-aged and older men.

Between this period of the middle thirties and the beginning of my own fieldwork twenty years had passed and many changes had taken place. The status of the chief had sharply declined and he was now assisted by the four government headmen. Every village except the chief's village had a Catholic or Protestant catechist, and there had been a marked trend towards learning catechism in preparation for baptism, which had begun about 1946. Hence the catechetical school was usually attended by the majority of under twenty-five's in the village.

Agnatic kinship had ceased to be the principle of village membership. Nor can it be said that headmen build up villages by getting people to settle at a particular spot. It is not always easy even to find the headman, village population is not very stable, and a man can settle with any category of kin.

To discover the traditional headman required careful phrasing of questions. When I visited a village and asked for the *osekulu yimbo* (the traditional phrase for the village headman) I

[18] Ibid., p. 274.

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622 villagers a certain, not very marked, respect, which may be increased by such factors as kinship ties between him and them, and his personal qualities.

• 621 Nor is the village itself clearly defined as a social unit. It does not possess any corporate rights over fishing and hunting sites, or control access to firewood gathering. A man may hold land in two villages. It is rarely that a village acts or is treated as a unit. The two main occasions on which the village is thus 'represented' are at marriages and in the context of the catechetical school. The party which goes from the bridegroom's [628] village to the bride's represents her village, to the other village; at the wedding feast food is given out on large basket plates, one for each village represented among the guests.

797 The role of the catechetical school as representative of the village as a whole will be discussed in another chapter; here it should be noted that the ceremonial reception of visiting missionaries by the 'school people' of the village has been evidently copied to some extent from the welcome given to the bridegroom's party, and this has in turn copied certain features from the welcoming of missionaries—notably the use of speeches in Portuguese.

361 The hamlets[20] and isolated households do not indicate a modernizing 'individualistic' trend away from village life, since 'conservative' and 'progressive' people are to be found in both units of residence. The Ovimbundu, whether educated 621 or illiterate, when talking about themselves (particularly in 829 comparison with the Kimbundu of Northern Angola) emphasize that they are a village-dwelling people, and for them the real values of village life seem to be the sociability and mutual help that a man living among his kin can enjoy. By settling in a village one indicates where the pull of kinship ties is strongest rather than any particular allegiance to the village headman.

[20] I use this term for a settlement with less than four households.

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CHAPTER IV

THE INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF VILLAGES

1. *The Village Epalanga*

In this chapter the internal social relations of the village and the relevance to them of the headman will be examined.

Epalanga, which has been mentioned as associated with Sapapula, the Epalanga of the former chief Kafelo, was a village of 148 inhabitants living in 36 households. Its houses stretched from near the River Keve (or Cuvo) to near the track leading to Chicunda, a distance of between half and two-thirds of a mile. Its layout is of the untidy scattered sort typical of most Umbundu villages, indeed its size leads it to be more scattered and spread out than is usual. Houses are surrounded by their own gardens in which maize and other crops are grown, and there are a number of stretches of bush in between homesteads.

Four main sources of origin (as regards kinship ties not as regards localities) for Epalanga may be noted. The largest 'kinship core'[1] was composed of Sapapula and his kin numbering 16 households. The second largest was that of the kin of Mwehombo (who was a matrilateral 'brother'[2] of Sapapula) and Mbati the former chief of Gumba and mother's brother

[1] This term seems more satisfactory than 'cluster' which has a local meaning, or 'group' which suggests an unilineal descent group. It is not intended to give a term indicating a unit with defined boundaries. Childs notes that *imbo* (village) can also be used as a word for a cluster of houses within a village. He also gives the word *ocitanda* for a ward within a village. This word was not known locally.

[2] I have employed inverted commas to indicate classificatory use of terms which for Europeans refer to the members of the elementary family, e.g. matrilateral 'brother'. I have not done so where the classificatory use relates to a term not associated with the elementary family, e.g. mother's brother. In ordinary social life there is no great distinction between a 'true' and a 'classificatory' mother's brother.

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[Village of Epalanga]

621 of both Mwehombo and Sapapula. The third grouping was that of Ndjoleya (who was not directly related to Mwhombo or Sapapula) and his kin. Finally there were some people who were linked to Lusase (chief of Gumba 1954–6) who was not and had apparently never been an inhabitant of Epalanga, plus a few individuals who cannot be fitted on to any kinship core.

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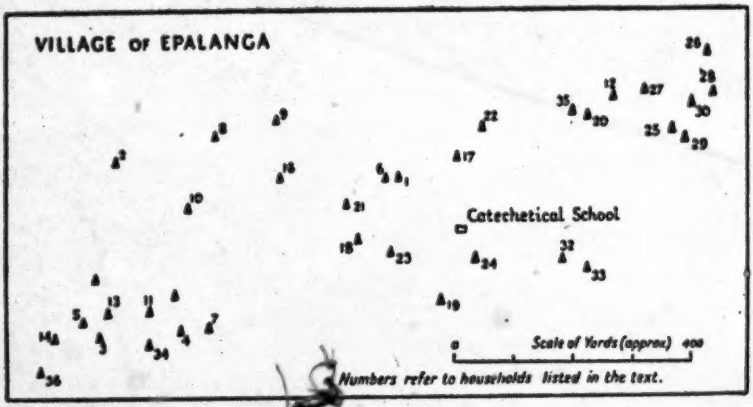

621 To some extent these differences of origin tended to be represented in the lay-out of the village. Sapapula's kin lived at the end of the village nearest the river, the kin of Mbati and Mwehombo lived in the centre of the village, and Ndjoleya's kinship core was to be found at the end of Epalanga by the Chicunda track. However, comparison of the list given below with the plan of the village show that the correspondence between core membership and the part of the village resided in is by no means total.[3]

In actual social life the differences between the cores to a large extent disappears. People from all cores take part in such activities as dances, funerals, house-building, and hunts, and this is facilitated by the numerous ties of kinship and marriage which exist between members of the different cores. Ndjoleya's

[3] Thus, Sendje, Sapapula's wife's mother, lived at Ndjoleya's end of the village. Ndjoleya had formerly lived at the other end of the village, but had moved. His 'sister', Tjingonene, still lived near his old home.

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[Village of Epalanga]

cluster was much more autonomous *vis-à-vis* Sapapula than were the members of the Mbati-Mwehombo grouping through the more numerous and closer kin ties; yet it would be wrong to regard Ndjoleya's kin as isolated.[4] This greater autonomy was a matter of degree rather than kind.

With regard to geographical origin, it is evident that the population had been recruited from over quite a wide area. Of the 36 household heads 7 were born in Cela of whom 6 had come from Cela to Gumba, and 1 had been born in Cela, then come to Gumba, then moved to Menga and then returned to Gumba. 3 household heads had come from Utende to Gumba, and 2 had come from Namba. 12 had come to Epalanga from Cassongue. 7 household heads (including 2 who had subsequently lived in Cassongue) had at one time lived in Katembo (the village associated with Mbati). 1 householder was apparently born in Gumba but had no Katembo link. 2 household heads were from Ndjandju (one having lived in Cassongue after leaving Ndjandju, the other being the catechist) and 1 was from Chicunda. On the origins of 5 household heads I have no information.

My information on Epalanga suffers from a number of gaps. Some genealogical information collected was lost. Too frequently I neglected to ask if a particular relationship was patrilateral or matrilateral, nor did I enquire sufficiently as to whether particular marriages were between kinsfolk or not.

These deficiencies to some extent 'fit' the kinship system. A kinship tie may exist between two people which is significant in the social relations between them, yet they may not be sure as to whether it is patrilateral or matrilateral, or even as to what is the category of kinship involved. Thus a resident of Simbwyikoka's village told me one day that Simbwyikoka was his 'brother', some time later he was a brother-in-law, and after this again said that he was a 'brother'.

There is also confusion over pedigrees. The pedigree which Simbwyikoka gave me in December 1955 differed from the one that he gave me in April 1956. Two people who claim to be

[4] Ndjoleya once referred to himself as *Osikulu yinlo* (elder of the *inlo*) this being a case of *inlo* used for a cluster within a village. Ndjoleya's folk recognized Sapapula as being head of the village.

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[Village of Epalanga]

602 'close' kin may not be able to indicate the set of genealogical[5] links between them and will not be at all surprised or even interested by this: hence it is impossible to draw up a genealogy of Epalanga. I have attempted to show the very complicated 128 network of relationships by a series of charts—one big chart would have so many cross-cutting lines as to be largely unintelligible.

Three charts are given to illustrate particular sections of the mesh of kin and affinal ties. They are not intended as exhaustive records of the relationship of any one kinship core or of any single individual. Rather, they are intended to give a general impression of how the proliferation of the strands of kinship [621] and marriage brings about a complicated and formless patchwork in which everybody is included.

2. *Information on Household Heads*

601 List I. Residents of Epalanga as of December 1956. Female 621 household heads are indicated by a star against their names. The numbers are used on the map of the village (see p. 50).

Sapapula's Kinship Core

1. Aspirante, sister's son of Sapapula, son-in-law of Wayangu.
2. *Avilo, sister's daughter of Sapapula, 'sister' to Tjingonene (31).
3. Batista, son of Epalata (5) and husband of a sister of Kasosi (7).
4. Bernacio, son-in-law of Sapapula, 'son' to Kasosi (7).
5. Epalata, matrilateral cross-cousin of Sapapula.
6. Ernesto, sister's son of Sapapula, full brother of Aspirante (1) married to a daughter's daughter of Sasamela (see List II).
7. Kasosi, 'grandson' of Sapapula through being sister's son[6] to Wasuka (15). A 'son' to Guilherme and 'father' to Bernacio (4).

[5] Ovimbundu even traditionally seem to have been little interested in genealogies. (Information from Dr. G. M. Childs.)

[6] According to Umbundu kinship terminology, Wasuka being a matrilateral cross-cousin of Sapapula could call him 'father' and Kasosi could call his mother's brother's (Wasuka) father 'grandfather'.

2 [cf. charts on pp. 91, 96, 97, in category M6-Analyst]

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8. *Natjingendele, cross-cousin of Sapapula, had formerly lived at the other end of Epalanga near her 'brother' Ndjoleya (30). 601 621
9. Patientia, 'brother' of Sapapula's wife Nahoka.
10. Sapapula, sister's son of Mbati, 'brother' of Luanga (21) and Mwehombo, not related to Ndjoleya (30) or Lusase.
11. Saviel, sister's son of Sapapula married to Soko, a daughter of Mwehombo. By an earlier marriage he had become affinally related to Tjingonene (31).
12. *Sendje, mother of Nahoka, Sapapula's wife.
13. Tjamwanga, matrilateral cross-cousin of Sapapula and paternal half-brother of Epalata (5).
14. Tjimbandongo, son of Epalata (5) and therefore a classificatory 'grandson' of Sapapula.
15. Wasuka, matrilateral cross-cousin of Sapapula, and 'brother' of Epalata (5).
16. *Wimbu, a widow, sister's daughter of Sapapula, her husband had been a mother's brother of Luanga (21).

The Mbati-Mwehombo kinship core

17. Armandio, sister's son of Mwehombo (and of Sapapula).
18. Gonçalve, own son of Mwehombo (therefore 'son' of Sapapula).
19. Jaime, son of Mbati—cross-cousin of Mwehombo, formerly married to Soko (daughter of Mwehombo) who was now the wife of Saviel (11), later married to Delfina, a brother's daughter of Ndjoleya.
20. Joaõ, cross-cousin of Sapapula. He tended, however, to be associated with the Mbati-Mwehombo kinship core, owing to his marriage to Paulina, daughter of Mwehombo, and full sister of Gonçalve (18).
21. Luanga, matrilateral 'brother' to Mwehombo (and also to Sapapula) patrilateral 'brother' to Ndjoleya. Luanga's wife Muhongo was a 'sister' of Maria, the wife of Paulo (24).
22. Manuel, sister's son of Mwehombo, his first wife had been a sister (not known if real or classificatory) of Maria, Paulo's wife (24).

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601 23. *Nahenge, cross-cousin of Sapapula, and sister of Joaõ (20).
602 24. Paulo, 'elder of the catechetical school', sister's son of Mwehombo (and of Sapapula). His wife Maria was a daughter of Mbati.

Ndjoleya's kinship core

25. Augusto, sister's son to Ndjoleya, his wife Luisa was a daughter (by an earlier marriage) of Nalivonga, daughter of Sapapula and wife of Bernacio (4).
26. Costa, 'brother' of Ndjoleya (30), and husband of Nakalende, a cross-cousin of Paulo (24).
27. Cypriano, sister's son of Ndjoleya (30).
28. Ferreira, 'brother' of Ndjoleya (30).
29. Julio, sister's son of Ndjoleya and full brother of Augusto (25).
30. Ndjoleya, one of his wives was a sister (not known whether real or classificatory) of Bernacio, another a full sister of one of Mwehombo's wives.
31. *Tjingonene, 'sister' of Ndjoleya, by another path 'sister' of Avilo. Her daughter Feliciana was a cross-cousin of Nahoka, the wife of Sapapula, and had married Daniel, a sister's son of Lusase.

Persons with kin links to Lusase

32. Bartolomeu, sister's son of Lusase and also of Sapapula, 'son' of Wasuka (15), cross-cousin of Ndjoleya and also of Paulo (24).
33. *Nalundu, matrilateral 'sister' of Bartolomeu.

Other residents

34. *Nasemela, widow of Sasamela. (See List II).
35. Pedro Tjikete Santos, catechist.
36. *Tjambo, 'sister' of Bartolomeu (32), not included with him in the group linked to Lusase, since although she had formerly lived near his house, she moved to be near Tjimbandongo (14), whose 'mother' she was.

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wife of Ernesto (6). Patrilateral 'father' to Paula (24) and Saviel (11). Affinally related to Mwehombo, a 'sister' of whom he had married.

Wayangu, paternal half-brother of Mwehombo, resident at Epalanga till the end of 1955, wife's father to Aspirante (1) had married a sister (not clear whether own or classificatory) of Lusase.

3. *Kinship and marriage in the village setting*

The foregoing tabulated information and the charts indicate the two main principles of integration in Epalanga, as in other Umbundu villages, the settling of individuals near senior kinsmen and the existence of a number of intra-village marriage ties.

For a clearer outline of village structure to appear, it is necessary to give a brief sketch of the contemporary kinship system which will be discussed more thoroughly in later chapters. This is cognatic, with little distinction between patrilineal and matrilineal kin, the elementary family being the basic household unit, the individual being permitted to settle with any category of kin, and a high percentage of preferential marriages.[1]

The right of settling where one pleases, as 'the heart chooses', is recognized even in children. Minessi, the 7-year-old son of Gonçalve (18), used generally to eat at the household of his father's sister Paulina, the wife of Joaõ (20). Gonçalve said about this to me 'He is very fond of his father's sister.'

While the traditional norm by which a man lived in his father's village is still remembered, at least by older men, a

[1] Childs (p. 56) states that it is permitted to marry a cross-cousin on either side, a sister's daughter, and a father's sister. My informants generally agreed that the marriage with a father's sister was not and had not been permitted. Marriage is not permitted with 'true' kin of these categories. Padre Feltin, the superior of the Bimbe Catholic Mission who knew of the existence of these marriages, told me that very few Umbundu marriages came within the prohibited (a prohibition removable by a dispensation) degrees of kinship laid down by the Catholic Church (that is, up to, and including, third cousins). Such marriages in the past might have been with geographically as well as socially distant kin. Childs quotes a case of a marriage arranged, after the discovery of a kinship tie, between partners living as far apart as Ciyaka (Quiaca) and Ngalangi (Galangue).

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father does not exercise great authority over his grown sons even if they live in the same village, nor does their living in different villages lead to a breach in personal relations. Sapapula who told me that a man should stay in his father's village till the latter's death had four sons, none of whom lived in Epalanga. Two lived in Menga (where Sapapula had lived up to 1946) and maintained friendly contact with their father. One who lived in Cela seemed socially as well as geographically more remote, and the fourth was a labour migrant given up for lost.

The preferential marriages[8] have continued in practice when most of the other institutions of the old kinship system have disintegrated. Their function is to multiply the relationships between individuals living in a particular neighbourhood, and to limit the socio-geographical range within which marriage partners are selected. Of a sample of 121 existing marriages 87, that is 70.3%, were with cross-cousins, and only 13.7% were with non-kinswomen.[9]

Even some of the non-kin marriages fitted into the general pattern of increasing ties within a limited social field. Thus in Epalanga Jaime (19) had married Delfina, a brother's daughter to Ndjoleya. They were not kinsfolk yet this fitted in with the pattern of kin marriages in increasing links between different kinship cores in the village. Similarly Costa (26) and his wife Nakalende were not agreed (when questioned separately) as to whether they were kinsfolk, but this is not really significant since

[8] I had been inclined to interpret these marriages as functions of the relations between kin groups. Dr. Mary Douglas has suggested to me that these marriages were in the past not related to any system of kin groups but had, as at the present day, the function of multiplying the kinship ties within a limited field. I do not know of any clear evidence which could at this time settle the point.

[9] I count here as kin marriages those between *sakwafiuka*, funeral friends, who though not kinsfolk tend to be assimilated to cross-cousins in social usage. 'Cross-cousin' tends to be at the present time a blanket category, and I have repeatedly found asking men about their wife's kinship status that they would first give some other term and then change to 'cross-cousin'. [Epalume]. This explains why under present conditions the percentage of cross-cousin marriages in relation to the total number of marriages seems to be rising. Thus in 56 marriages (existing or terminated) contracted by 23 men who had taken part in the caravan trade, while the percentage of marriages with non-kinswomen was slightly smaller (12.5) the figure of marriages with cross-cousins was very much smaller (42.9) and the figure of marriages with kin other than cross-cousins, sister's daughters, and *sakwafiuka* was much higher (23 %) compared to the contemporary figure of 5%.

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582 their marriage also fits a general pattern of Umbundu marriage,
621 a choice made within a limited range joining together individuals of different kinship cores.

The multiplication of ties and their concentration within a neighbourhood by this means do not prevent a man from having kin and affines a day or two's journey away. It has earlier been indicated that the population of Epalanga was from quite a wide area. Yet the consequences of previous preferential marriages (thus Paulo and Saviel were related both patrilaterally and matrilaterally) and the trend towards the establishment of new marriage ties had created a complicated mesh of linkages that has been described within a not particularly stable village population, whose senior residents had been there for only ten years. To use again the anthropological metaphor of kinship as a network, the network can have odd strings running out quite a way, but in a village the different ties will be bound up in a knot.

602 The long-range ties (with such obvious exceptions as those
166 with kin living in cities) are not the result of the range of kin spreading wider and wider under modern conditions. The evidence of pedigrees indicates that kinship and marriage links between individuals in, and actual migration to and from Gumba and Cassongue, Cela, and Namba, date back well into the nineteenth century. There is far less evidence of connections and migration between Gumba and areas to the south and east. This geographical aspect of social relations persists at the present day.

621 It has been indicated that the high proportion of preferential marriages creates a certain local stability, since many marriages are with people living close to. Yet the basic stability lies not so much in the relative stability of a local population, but in the pattern by which links of distant kinship are changed into marriage ties and new bonds are speedily established among the fortuitously assembled population of a new village.

4. *Headmen and Kinship Cores*

622 I now turn to the other principle of village integration, the settling of individuals near senior kinsmen. In the previous

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763 Mwehombo, and elder of the school, a post he would certainly have lost had this come to the ears of the missionaries. Attitudes to the verdict are interesting. Sapapula assured me that [754] Mwehombo had killed many people by sorcery both sons and sisters' sons; Luanga did not see the contradiction which I pointed out to him of his saying both that Mwehombo was good and that he had practised sorcery; Gonçalve, Mwehombo's son, appeared sceptical of the verdict, as did Aspirante, Sapapula's sister's son who was married to a daughter of Mwehombo's half-brother, Wayangu.

764 The verdict did not prevent Mwehombo having an impressive funeral. He was buried according to his wishes in the traditional hammock placed in the circular grave, instead of the modern coffin placed in the modern oblong grave. As a caravan-leader he was buried by the track to Chicunda at the point where the path to Epalanga branched off. A low thatched [237] covering was erected over his grave with the horns of the beast killed at the funeral on it. In 1956 Gonçalve and Pedro Nendi, son of Mbati and therefore a cross-cousin of Mwehombo, replaced this by a concrete memorial in the form of a cross with the base inscribed in Portuguese 'Simon Mwehombo Native of Gumba Great Man died 13th January 1955.'

797 Thus Mwehombo had twice undergone conversion from pagan to Christian, once as he lay dying and once after death. 754 His posthumous conviction for sorcery affected neither the form of funeral, nor the continued residence of his kin in the village. His conviction for sorcery was a reflection of the social strains in which he had been involved, not the opening of another cycle of conflict. The kinship cores are not segments opposing one 621 another as in a lineage system; they possess no clearly defined 571 boundaries[10] or continuing existence in time. Their existence is dependent on the persons around whom the cores have formed, and on their deaths they lack any integrating principles. Mwehombo dead, his kinsfolk mostly found no objection in continuing to live in the village where his rival now lived as undisputed traditional headman.

621 There is no word in Umbundu for these groupings. The

[10] For example I have included José in the Mwehombo-Mbati kinship core, on the basis of association, but he came to the village through a tie with Sapapula.

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word 'otjitawila' is given by Dr. Childs[11] as being used for a section of the village; however, I have not found this word known locally. 621

It may be asked how typical Epalanga is of other villages. In size it is larger than usual, having 36 households. (The average number, using figures from 14 villages, is 18.36 households; the largest, Epalanga, had 36 and the smallest 5.) In structure other villages presented the same picture of ill-defined kinship cores held together by a network of kin and affinal ties, with village headmen emerging by a varying collection of claims, of which the most significant seemed to be a position as the principal focus of kinship ties.

5. *Kinsmen and the Choice of Residence*

When one asks a man why he has settled in a particular village, a common enough answer is that he has settled there because he has 'family' there. When asked who his 'family' (the Portuguese word *família* is used even by non-Portuguese speakers) is, he will give the name of a senior kinsman, or he may give more than one name. He may even give the name of somebody living outside the village. Thus in Epalanga when I asked Bartolomeu why he had settled there he replied that it was because of his mother's brother Lusase who was not an Epalanga resident. It was therefore not practicable for me, as I had at one time intended, to find which categories of kin are most likely to be settled with, by asking individuals in villages I censused, and obtaining percentages. 591 602

It is possible to indicate some of the 'pulls' which affect a choice of residence. In the traditional system, when a boy's father died he would settle with a father's brother. Nowadays, it is generally expected that he will settle with his mother's brother, this being the answer given by informants when asked where he will go. In practice, the pull of the mother's brother's household for a child does not seem to be so strong. In Epalanga, out of thirteen persons under 20 who had neither father nor mother resident in the village, only one was living with a mother's brother. 591

[11] See Childs, pp. 36–37.

THE OVIMBUNDU UNDER TWO SOVEREIGNTIES

On the village level, however, the importance of the mother's brother tie and of the tie between matrilateral 'brothers' becomes very apparent. None of Sapapula's four sons had settled in Epalanga, and his only classificatory 'son' was Gonçalve, own son to Mwehombo, Sapapula's matrilateral 'brother'. Seven household heads were sister's sons of Sapapula. This trend for matrilateral ties to predominate is marked also in Katembo and Mbunga, but less evident at Belem. Indeed, 'neo-matrilinearity' as a principle of village structure may be a general and not simply a local feature of Umbundu society, since Mr. C. M. N. White[13] has found that the settlements of Ovimbundu within Northern Rhodesia are marked by a predominance of matrilateral ties. This is referable to the contemporary kinship system in which the father-son tie is predominantly a personal one, with a limited extension of attitudes to classificatory fathers, whereas a man's relation with a mother's brother seems little affected by the question of genealogical distance. Perhaps the relations between the group of agnatic kin were so closely tied to the old village structure that when it broke up it disintegrated also the wider agnatic ties. Yet at the same time such matrilineal institutions as matrilineal inheritance and the non-repayment of loans among matrikin have weakened or disappeared.

Running counter to this principle of settling in the village of a senior kinsman who is likely to belong to one's matrikin, is the principle of cross-cousin marriage. 'If you have married your cross-cousin when your son grows up he will see a cross-cousin here, a cross-cousin there, and so he will stay.' That is, a man will stay in his father's village not simply by virtue of the father-son tie but because he will be surrounded by kinsmen. The relation between cross-cousins is one of equality and solidarity, expressed in joking and in burial services. To say that one stays in a place because one has cross-cousins at hand is to indicate an ideal of equal relations with a circle of kinsmen rather than attachment to the following of an important kinsman.

These two principles co-exist in actual social life. A man will recognize and respect a number of senior kinsmen living in his

[13] In letters.

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neighbourhood and will explain his choice of residence by quoting the names of one or more of these; yet the weaving together of so many strands of kinship and affinity, ultimately through marriage links, is what gives the local population its relative degree of stability. It should be emphasized that the integration established within a village by the network of kinship and affinal ties is dependent on the integration created by the same amorphous network which runs through and beyond the sub-chiefdom. It is this network into which the individual is woven by multiple ties that absorbs the neo-matrilineal pull apparent to some degree in choice of residence and keeps the system essentially cognatic.

The use of the word *família* reflects this situation. A man may say of a particular senior kinsman 'He is my *família*', that is, my kinsman, my most important kinsman with whom I have settled, yet also he may say 'My *família* is in Cela', that is, the greater part of my kinsmen live in Cela. When Bartolomeu explained that he had settled where he did because of Lusase, he was perhaps combining the two kinds of references. He had settled in Gumba because he had a large number of kinsmen there among whom Lusase was pre-eminent. A man explaining the locality of his *família* in the wider sense will associate it with a particular sub-chiefdom—'My family is all in Menga'—when he is outside it; when he is in it he is more likely to refer to a particular village.

Although individuals living in a village may have come there through several kinship sources yet the majority of them will probably have some kinship or affinal tie with the traditional headman. This collection of individual ties does not provide the headman with a body of followers, nor is having a large number of dependants a value of contemporary Umbundu culture. If it were felt that the best thing to be in life is the patron of a body of kinsmen and followers, headmanship would survive as a predominant influence in local life despite the collapse of its political and legal responsibilities. In fact not even old men feel this way.

The idea of the village as a corporate group with a jural and political personality rather than a residential unit has not survived the break-up of agnatic solidarity, the disappearance

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621 178 of the men's house, and the headman's loss of status. The new institution of the catechetical school does not revive village solidarity in this form. The contemporary Ovimbundu do not live in a 'village headman society' comparable to those of British Central Africa,[13] since the concept and manifestations of village solidarity around a headman are so notably deficient. 356 Reference may also be made to the economic ethics of the Ovimbundu with their approval of making money and the [426] belief that all loans even within the circle of the elementary family should be repaid, that is, wealth is seen by all as an end in itself rather than a means of obtaining personal loyalties.

622 178 In the previous chapter it was shown how the traditional headmanship is no longer a significant legal and political institution. In this chapter I have tried to indicate that it lacks sources of authority and prestige within the village.

The line of argument has involved reference to the contemporary kinship system of which an outline has been given. 128 This will be more fully discussed in later chapters, when a more detailed comparison of present institutions with the traditional kinship system will be made.

[13] For an example of these societies see J. C. Mitchell, *The Yao Village*, Manchester 1956.

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More usually they are followed and sometimes

preceded by singing, and dancing. There are a certain number of 'school' songs as distinct from hymns, which are semi- or non-religious in nature, which are taught by the catechist and are sung on these occasions with other Umbundu traditional songs. There seems to be little composition of songs by present day Ovimbundu nor do they know popular Portuguese songs.

The school itself, the centre of these activities, is generally built of adobe bricks in the shape of a church. In any village where there is a fair number of school people it will be the largest building in the village and even in villages of mixed Christian and pagan population the school building tends to be in the centre of the village, a topographical reflection of the social significance of the catechist and the catechetical school. In the school men and women are separated, men on the right, women on the left, a custom also found in some Angolan parish churches.

The catechist's presence is a mark of the identity of the village. The catechetical school is the only institution which groups people of different domestic groups on a village-wide basis, and in which people participate in a wider set of social relations on a village and not on an individual basis, as people are linked to kinsmen, or to the post or to an employer. One can and does associate oneself with a village if one does not belong geographically to it but simply attends its school. Thus Fernando considered himself as belonging to the village of Ngolo Católica whose catechetical school he attended, although his house was well away from the main village, being much nearer the Protestant village of Vila Graça, where indeed he had kinsmen. When I asked a woman where she lived she replied by giving the name of the village catechist. The only occasions on which a group of people represent one village *vis-à-vis* another are in connection with the travels of missionaries, and in the wedding feasts, which will be described in another chapter.

A missionary on leaving one village for another has his luggage carried by the school people of the village where he has been staying, who will march singing, with perhaps a boy banging on a drum. When they get to the next village they will be greeted at the entrance into the village by the catechist and

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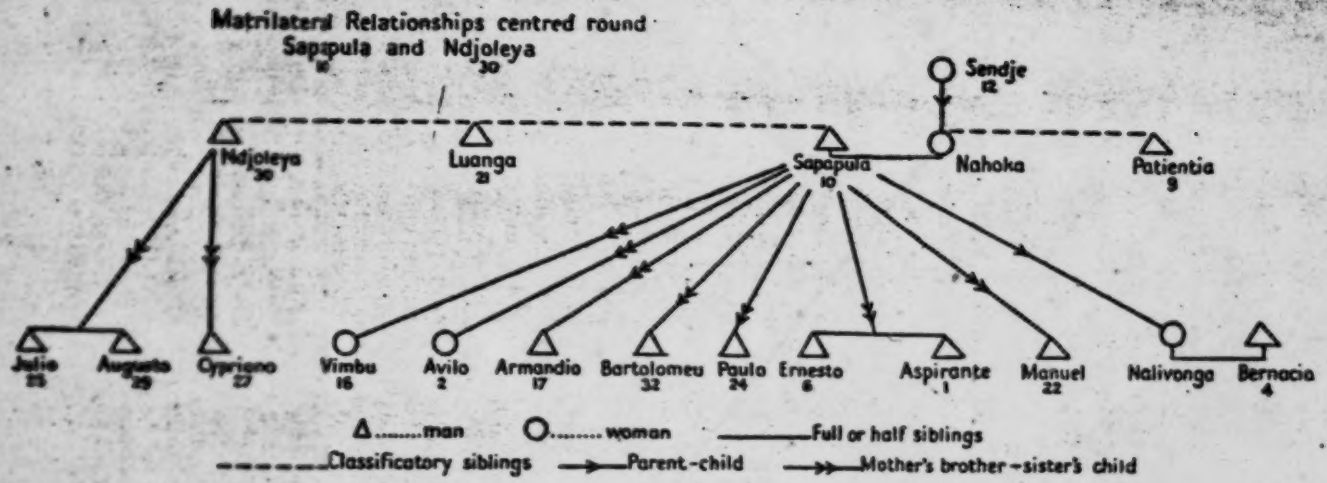

CHART 1. This shows the relationships centred round Sapapula (10) and Ndjoleya (30), the leading personalities of the village. Although they were not directly related there was a link through Luanga (21), who was matrilaterally a 'brother' of Sapapula, and patrilaterally of Ndjoleya. All are living members of the village.

[p. 91]

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with Adolfo, the small son of Jaime, his wife's brother, but when asked what relation Adolfo was to him, became confused and said, 'My son, my sister's son.'

There exist marked variations in terminology in Umbundu country.[16] For instance, *sekulu* seems to be used for mother's brother only in north-western Umbundu country. Elsewhere *manu*[17] is used for mother's brother, and *sekulu* is used for grandfather. At Caconda, where there has been strong Portuguese influence since the eighteenth century, only the Portuguese kinship terms are known.[18]

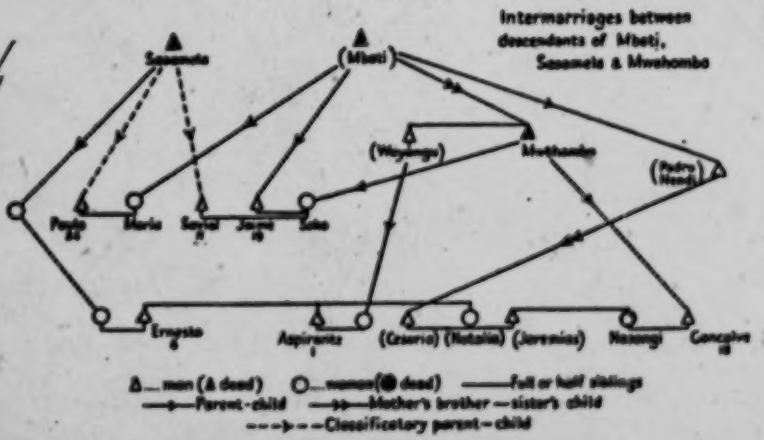

CHART 2. Mbati, Mwehombo and some of their kin. For Mbati (dead, non-member) and Mwehombo (dead, former member) see Chapter III, section 1. For Sasamela (dead, former member) and Cesario, Jeremias, Natalia, Pedro Nendi, and Wayangu (all living non-members) see List II (pp. 55–6). The rest of the individuals named on the chart are members of Epalanga. Paulo and Saviel were 'brothers', both patrilaterally and matrilaterally.

3. *Kinship Norms*

In this section I shall describe the relations that existed within the elementary family in the time of the rubber trade. A man

[16] For other lists of kinship terms see Hastings, pp. 83–85. Childs, pp. 47–56. M. Howse, *Umbundu Lessons* (Dondi, 1953), Vol. II, pp. 195–7.
[17] Etymologically, *manu* seems to mean 'mother-person'.
[18] Private information.

[Text continues on p. 98]

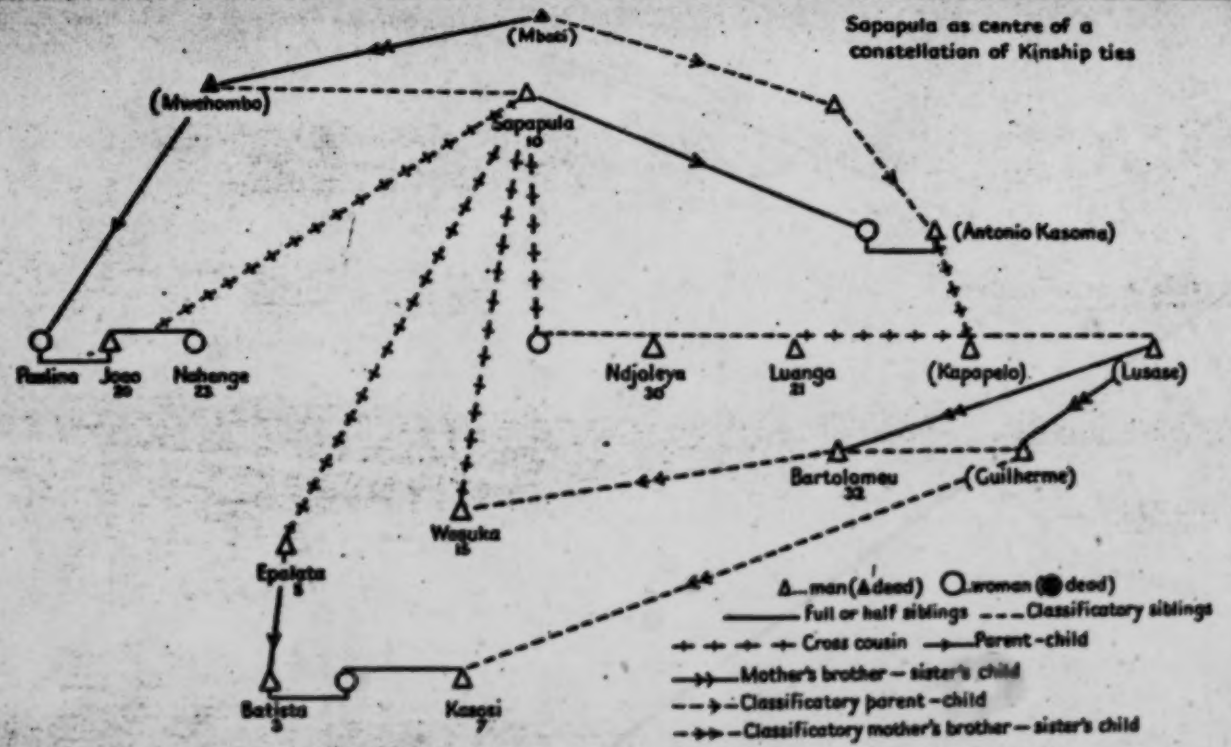

CHART 3. Sapapula as the centre of a constellation of kinship ties. It is interesting to note how, in view of the conflict described in Chapter IX, Sapapula is linked to Guilherme, Kapapelo, and Lusase by several paths. All are living members of Epalanga except for Mbati and Mwehombo (for whom see note to Chart 2) and Antonio Kasoma, Guilherme, Kapapelo, and Lusase. For details on these living non-members see List II, pp. 55–6. Not all ties existing between these individuals have been shown.

Correction. The relation of Bartolomeu and Guilherme to Lusase and of Mwehombo to Mbati should be that of classificatory sister's sons.

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602 183 the same time clearly an important part of social life. Kinship norms are confused, as is the correct term to use in a particular relationship. Ritual and jural sanctions are lacking, as are institutions based on the regular co-operation of groups of kinsmen. Yet a man likes to live with kinsfolk and there is a tendency for kin to cluster together in a neighbourhood.

602 127 By the very facts, that so many of a man's neighbours are his kinsmen, and that there is very little marked differentiation between the behaviour towards different categories of kin, kinship is robbed of any great specificity of content. It might be said that it is the quantity rather than the quality of kinship ties that makes kinship significant in establishing a 'sense of community' in a neighbourhood, in that the multiplicity of local kin ties creates some identification between a man's range of kin and his neighbourhood. At the same time a kinship tie provides a basis on which a closer relationship may be built by reciprocal services. It appears that the inheritance of property 602 428 recognizes kinship in this way by recognizing claims not on the basis of strict genealogical proximity but on the quality of the relationship.

128 A discussion of marriage and the household must be left to the next chapter. The outline given of the present kinship system is sufficiently clear to begin an examination of the reasons for the changes. This must rely to some extent on speculation, owing to a lack of information on the actual working of the kinship system while it was in transition to its present form.

613 178 The key change is the disappearance of the kinship groups. These, it seems, disappeared because of their high degree of dependence on the particular type of economy existing before 1911. It has already been argued that the distinction between the patrikin and the matrikin is an attempt to isolate economic claims and conflicts from village and political relationships, and that the giving of loans without right of repayment within the matrikin was called for by a trading system in which credit played an important part. With the end of the trade the wealth passing through Umbundu hands declined sharply, and there was neither need for funds to meet trading losses nor currency to provide them. A man obtained money either by growing crops

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This strong pull towards the mother's brother is, however, marked on the level of village relationships as has been already noted. It is possible that with regard to co-operation on the domestic plane the tie between a man and his wife's full or half siblings is stronger than that with his sister's children. This argument would claim that the tie created by marriage between a man and his wife's full or half siblings is one of the strongest in the Umbundu social structure, and as a further proof (albeit not quantitively assessed) may be quoted the frequency with which two households close together turn out to belong to a man and his wife's brother.

In the first section of this chapter it was argued that the high rate of preferential marriages greatly increased the number of social ties between individuals in a neighbourhood, and brought a renewal of ties with distant kin. In this section various aspects of the relationship between husband and wife have been examined. Husband and wife co-operate economically and outside working hours may pass their evenings together. In a dispute taken to the post a man is likely to take his wife as a witness. Mystically sanctioned obligations do exist between husband and wife. While the elementary family is the main domestic type, households headed by women are also found and there is a certain amount of mobility of children between households. The tie of a man with his wife's siblings, particularly when they are children, is significant for the domestic organization of households.

Marriage is indeed the pivotal institution of the Umbundu kinship system. The preferential marriages do not link descent groups to one another; rather they bring about the local concentration of kin which makes out of many vague and insecure links a strongly-woven community in which both husband and wife can live with relatives near at hand.

Of the personal relationship between husband and wife it would be impossible to say as an anthropologist has of another African people, 'Here people looked for little in marriage. A man would turn to his sixteenth cousin twice removed before he turned to his wife.'[88] A man shares with his wife his work and leisure, is linked to her by mystical obligations which are not

[88] Elenore Smith Bowen, *Return to Laughter*, London, 1954, p. 117.